

Exhibit A

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(54) UNIVERSAL SERIAL BUS ADAPTER FOR A MOBILE DEVICE

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(57) **ABSTRACT**

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(60) Provisional application No. 60/273,021, filed on Mar. 1, 2001, provisional application No. 60/330,486, filed on Oct. 23, 2001.

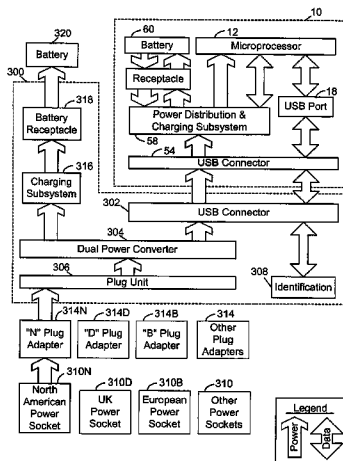
(51) **Int. Cl.**
H01M 10/46 (2006.01)

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(58) **Field of Classification Search** 320/111,
320/138, 114; 307/150, 151

See application file for complete search history.

18 Claims, 4 Drawing Sheets



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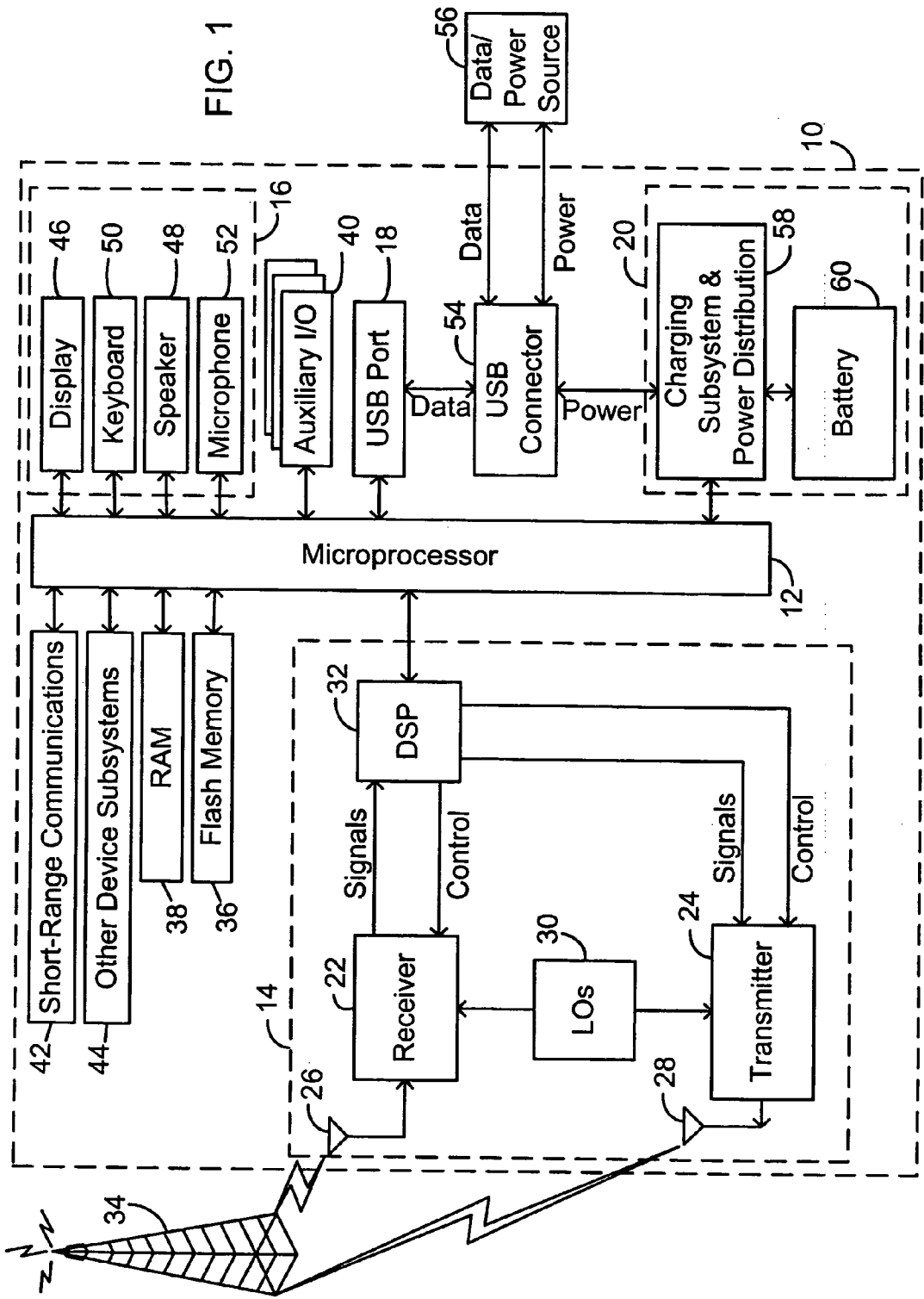
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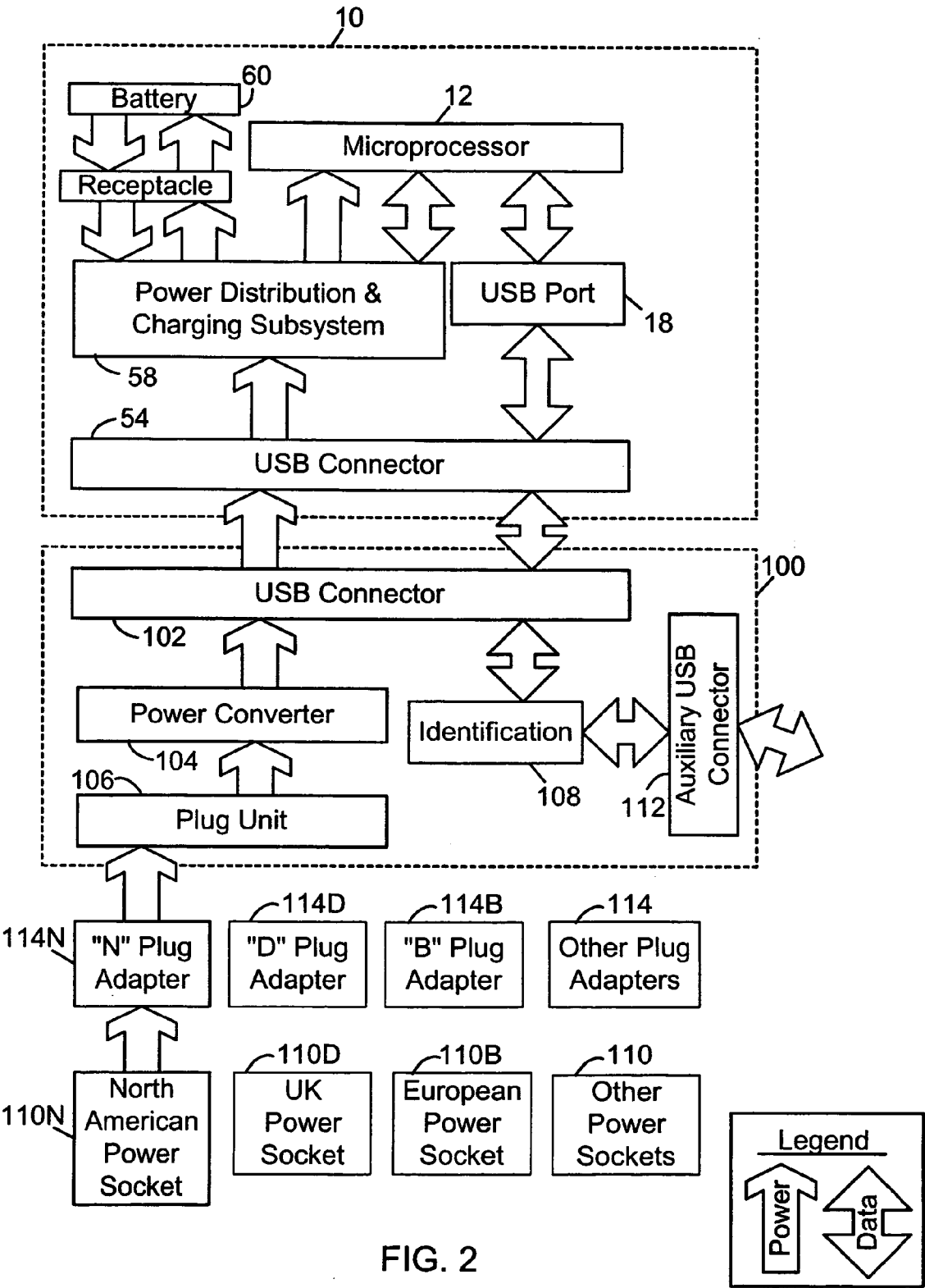


FIG. 2

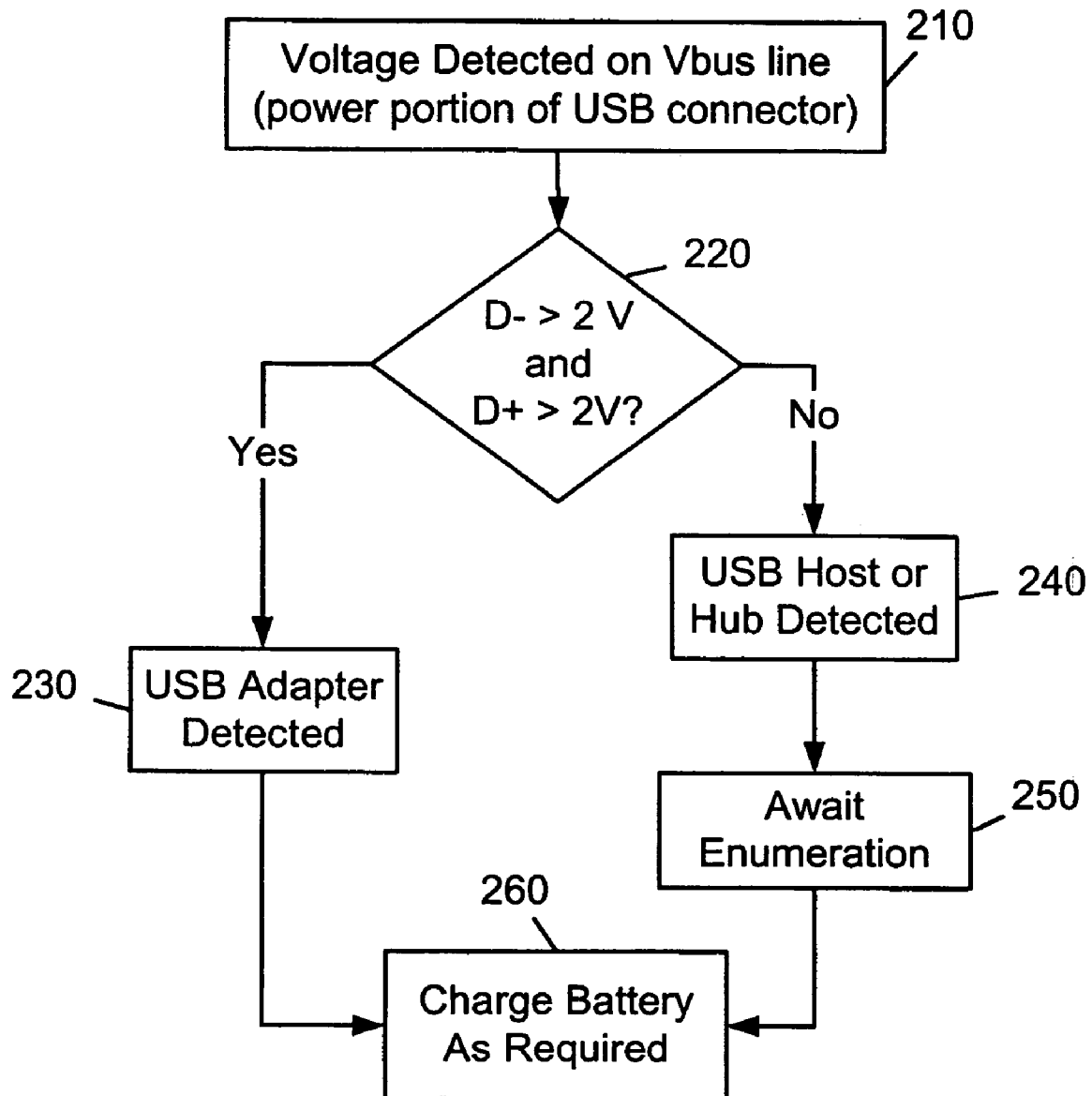


FIG. 3

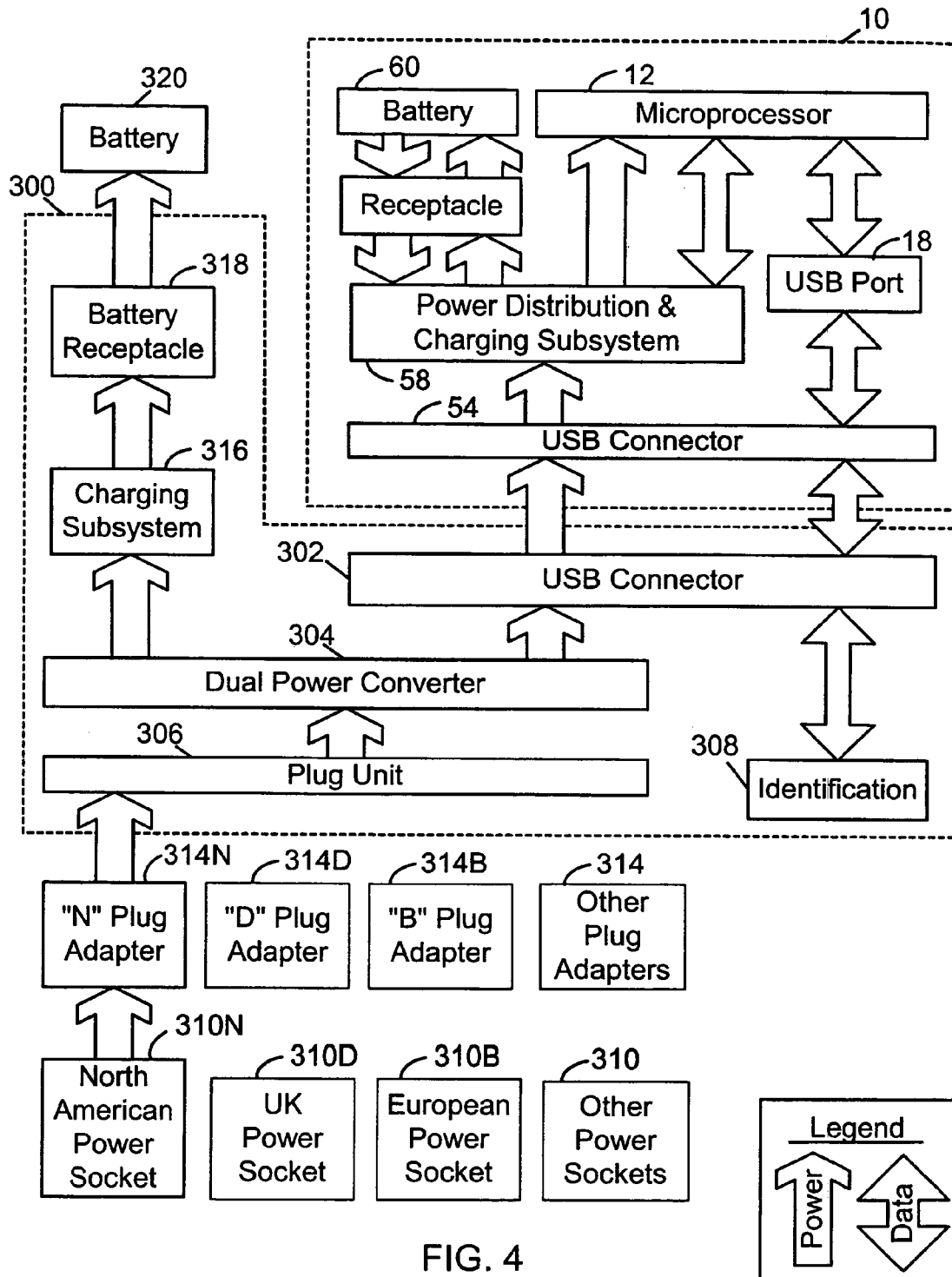


FIG. 4

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**UNIVERSAL SERIAL BUS ADAPTER FOR A
MOBILE DEVICE****CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED
APPLICATIONS**

This application is a continuation U.S. patent application Ser. No. 10/087,629, entitled "Multifunctional Charger System and Method," which was filed on Mar. 1, 2002, and issued as U.S. Pat. No. 6,936,936, U.S. patent application Ser. No. 10/087,629 claims priority from and is related to U.S. Provisional Application No. 60/273,021, entitled "System and Method for Adapting a USB to Provide Power for Charging a Mobile Device," which was filed on Mar. 1, 2001, and U.S. Provisional Application No. 60/330,486, entitled "Multifunctional Charger System and Method", which was filed on Oct. 23, 2001. The entirety of these prior applications are hereby incorporated into the present application by reference.

BACKGROUND**1. Field of the Invention**

This invention relates generally to power adapters. More particularly, the invention relates to power adapters for use with mobile devices.

2. Description of the Related Art

Providing an external source of power to a mobile device, such as a personal digital assistants ("PDA"), mobile communication device, cellular phone, wireless two-way e-mail communication device, and others, requires design considerations with respect to both the mobile device and the power source. With regard to the mobile device, most mobile devices provide a distinct power interface for receiving power from a power source, for instance to recharge a battery, and a separate data interface for communicating. For example, many mobile devices presently use USB (Universal Serial Bus) interfaces for communicating and use a separate power interface, such as a barrel connector, for receiving power.

It is desirable, however, to have a combined power and data interface. The mobile devices that do have combined power and data interfaces typically use non-standard and sometimes proprietary interfaces. Consequently, combined interfaces for a particular manufacturer's mobile device may not be compatible with combined interfaces for mobile devices provided by other manufacturers.

Although the USB interface can be used as a power interface, the USB is typically not used for that purpose by mobile devices. In accordance with the USB specification, typical USB power source devices, such as hubs and hosts, require that a USB device participate in a host-initiated process called enumeration in order to be compliant with the current USB specification in drawing power from the USB interface. Although a mobile device could be adapted to participate in enumeration when drawing power over the USB interface, it would be preferable in many situations, such as when a host would not be available, as often happens during normal use of a mobile device, to be able to utilize alternate power sources such as conventional AC outlets and DC car sockets that are not capable of participating in enumeration to supply power to the mobile device via a USB interface.

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SUMMARY

An adapter for providing a source of power to a mobile device through an industry standard port is provided. In accordance with one aspect of the invention, the adapter comprises a plug unit, a power converter, a primary connector, and an identification subsystem. The plug unit is operative to couple the adapter to a power socket and operative to receive energy from the power socket. The power converter is electrically coupled to the plug unit and is operable to regulate the received energy from the power socket and to output a power requirement to the mobile device. The primary connector is electrically coupled to the power converter and is operative to couple to the mobile device and to deliver the outputted power requirement to the mobile device. The identification subsystem is electrically coupled to the primary connector and is operative to provide an identification signal.

In accordance with another aspect, a USB adapter for providing a source of power to a mobile device through a USB port is provided. The USB adapter comprises a plug unit, a power converter, a primary USB connector, and an identification subsystem. The plug unit is operative to couple the USB adapter to a power socket and operative to receive energy from the power socket. The power converter is electrically coupled to the plug unit and is operable to regulate the received energy from the power socket and to output a power requirement to the mobile device. The primary USB connector is electrically coupled to the power converter and is operative to couple to the mobile device and to deliver the outputted power requirement to the mobile device. The identification subsystem is electrically coupled to the primary connector and is operative to provide an identification signal.

Another aspect provides a USB adapter for providing a source of power to a mobile device through a USB port. The USB adapter comprises a plug unit, a power converter, a primary USB connector, and an auxiliary USB adapter. The plug unit is operative to couple the USB adapter to a power socket and operative to receive energy from the power socket. The power converter is electrically coupled to the plug unit and is operable to regulate the received energy from the power socket and to output a power requirement to the mobile device. The primary USB connector is electrically coupled to the power converter and is operative to couple to the mobile device and to deliver the outputted power requirement to the mobile device. The auxiliary USB connector has data lines that are electrically coupled to the data lines of the primary USB connector.

Yet another aspect provides a method for providing energy to a mobile device using a USB adapter that comprises a plug unit, a primary USB connector, a power converter electrically coupled between the plug unit and the primary USB connector, and an identification subsystem electrically coupled to the primary USB connector. The method comprising the steps of coupling the USB connector to the mobile device, coupling the plug unit to a power socket, outputting a power requirement to the mobile device via the power converter and the USB connector, and providing an identification signal to the mobile device, via the identification subsystem and the USB connector, that is operative to inform the mobile device that the USB adapter is not limited by the power limits imposed by the USB specification.

In accordance with another aspect, a powering system for a mobile device having a USB connector is provided. The powering system comprises a power distribution subsystem

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in the mobile device that is operable to receive energy through the USB connector and to distribute the energy to at least one component in the mobile device and a USB adapter that is operative to couple to the USB connector. The USB adapter comprises a plug unit for coupling to a power socket and that is operable to receive energy from the power socket, a power converter electrically coupled to the plug unit for regulating the received energy and for providing a power requirement to the power distribution subsystem, and an identification subsystem that is operable to transmit an identification signal that is operative to identify the USB adapter as not being limited by the power limits imposed by the USB specification.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

In order that the invention identified in the claims may be more clearly understood, preferred embodiments thereof will be described in detail by way of example, with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which:

FIG. 1 is a schematic diagram of an exemplary mobile device which has an industry standard interface;

FIG. 2 is a schematic diagram of a first embodiment of a USB adapter that is coupled to an exemplary mobile device;

FIG. 3 is a flow chart illustrating an exemplary use of a USB adapter with a mobile device; and

FIG. 4 is a schematic diagram of an additional exemplary embodiment of a USB adapter that is coupled to both an exemplary mobile device and an external battery.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Exemplary Mobile Device

Turning now to the drawing figures, shown in FIG. 1 is a schematic diagram of an exemplary mobile communication device 10 which has an industry standard interface. The mobile communication device 10 is preferably a two-way communication device having at least voice or data communication capabilities. Preferably, the mobile device 10 is also capable of communicating over the Internet, for example, via a radio frequency ("RF") link. Examples of types of devices that could be classified as a mobile device 10 include a data messaging device, a two-way pager, a cellular telephone with data messaging capabilities, a wireless Internet appliance, a data communication device (with or without telephony capabilities), a personal digital assistants ("PDA"), a wireless two-way e-mail communication device, and others.

The exemplary mobile device 10 comprises a microprocessor 12, a communication subsystem 14, input/output ("I/O") devices 16, an industry standard interface 18 which in this example is a USB port, and a power subsystem 20. The microprocessor 12 controls the overall operation of the mobile device 10. The communication subsystem 14 provides the mobile device 10 with the ability to communicate wirelessly with external devices such as other mobile devices and other computers. The I/O devices 16 provide the mobile device 10 with input/output capabilities for use with a device user. The USB port 18 provides the mobile device 10 with a serial port for linking directly with other computers and/or a means for receiving power from an external power source. The power subsystem 20 provides the mobile device 10 with a local power source.

The exemplary communication subsystem 14 comprises components such as a receiver 22, a transmitter 24, antenna elements 26 and 28, local oscillators (LOs) 30, and a

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processing module such as a digital signal processor (DSP) 32. The particular design of the communication subsystem 14 and the components used therein can vary. It would be apparent to one of ordinary skill in the art to design an appropriate communication subsystem using conventional methods and components to operate over a communication network 34 based on the parameters necessary to operate over that communication network. For example, a mobile device 10 geographically located in North America may include a communication subsystem 14 designed to operate within the Mobitex™ mobile communication system or DataTAC™ mobile communication system, whereas a mobile device 10 intended for use in Europe may incorporate a General Packet Radio Service (GPRS) communication subsystem 14.

Network access requirements will also vary depending upon the type of network 34. For example, in the Mobitex and DataTAC networks, mobile devices 10 are registered on the network using a unique personal identification number or PIN associated with each device. In GPRS networks however, network access is associated with a subscriber or user of a mobile device 10. A GPRS device therefore requires a subscriber identity module (not shown), commonly referred to as a SIM card, in order to operate on a GPRS network. Without a SIM card, a GPRS device will not be fully functional. Local or non-network communication functions (if any) may be operable, but the mobile device 10 will be unable to carry out any functions involving communications over the network 34.

When required, after the network registration or activation procedures have been completed, a mobile device 10 may send and receive communication signals over the network 34. Signals received by the receiver antenna 26 through a communication network 34 are input to the receiver 22, which may perform such common receiver functions as signal amplification, frequency down conversion, filtering, channel selection and the like, and in the exemplary system shown in FIG. 1, analog to digital conversion. Analog to digital conversion of a received signal allows more complex communication functions such as demodulation and decoding to be performed in a DSP 32. Similarly, signals to be transmitted are processed, including modulation and encoding for example, by the DSP 32 and input to the transmitter 24 for digital to analog conversion, frequency up conversion, filtering, amplification and transmission over the communication network 34 via the transmitter antenna 28.

Also, in the exemplary communication subsystem 14, the DSP 32 processes communication signals and also provides for receiver and transmitter control. For example, the gains applied to communication signals in the receiver 22 and transmitter 24 may be adaptively controlled through automatic gain control algorithms implemented in the DSP 32.

In implementing its control function, the microprocessor 12 in the exemplary mobile device 10 executes an operating system. The operating system software used by the microprocessor 12 is preferably stored in a persistent store such as flash memory 36, or alternatively read only memory (ROM) or similar storage element. The microprocessor 12 may also enable the execution of specific device applications, which preferably are also stored in a persistent store. The operating system, specific device applications, or parts thereof, may also be temporarily loaded into a volatile store such as in RAM 38.

A predetermined set of applications which control basic device operations, including at least data and voice communication applications for example, will normally be installed

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on the mobile device **10** during manufacture. One such application loaded on the mobile device **10** could be a personal information manager (PIM) application. The PIM application preferably is an application for organizing and managing user inputted data items such as e-mail, calendar events, voice mails, appointments, and task items. The PIM data items may be stored in the RAM **38** and/or the flash memory **36**.

The PIM application preferably has the ability to send and receive data items, via the wireless network **34**. The PIM data items are preferably seamlessly integrated, synchronized and updated, via the wireless network **34**, with corresponding data items stored or associated with a host computer system (not shown) used by the device user. The synchronization of PIM data items is a process by which the PIM data items on the mobile device **10** and the PIM data items on the host computer system can be made to mirror each other.

There are several possible mechanisms for loading applications onto the mobile device **10**. For example, applications may be loaded onto the mobile device **10** through the wireless network **34**, an auxiliary I/O subsystem **40**, the serial port **18**, a short-range communications subsystem **42**, such as an infrared ("IR") communication system, or any other suitable subsystem **44**. When loading the applications onto the mobile device **10**, the device user may install the applications in the RAM **38**, the flash memory **36**, or preferably a non-volatile store (not shown) such as ROM for execution by the microprocessor **12**. The available application installation mechanisms can increase the utility of the mobile device **10** by providing the device user with a way of upgrading the mobile device **10** with additional and/or enhanced on-device functions, communication-related functions, or both. For example, a secure communication application may be loaded onto the mobile device **10** that allows for electronic commerce functions or other financial transactions to be performed using the mobile device **10**.

The I/O devices **16** may be used to display and/or compose data communication messages. In one mode of operation, a signal received by the mobile device **10**, such as a text message or web page download, will be received and processed by the communication subsystem **14**, forwarded to the microprocessor **12**, which will preferably further process the received signal, and provide the processed signal to one or more of the I/O devices **16** such as a display **46**. Alternatively, a received signal such as a voice signal can be provided to a speaker **48**, or alternatively to an auxiliary I/O device **40**. In another mode of operation a device user may compose a data item such as an e-mail message using a keyboard **50** in cooperation with the display **46** and possibly an auxiliary I/O device **40**. Alternatively, a device user may compose a voice message via a microphone **52**. The composed data item may then be transmitted over a communication network **34** using the communication subsystem **14**.

A short-range communications subsystem **42** may be provided in the mobile device **10** to allow the mobile device **10** to communicate with other systems or devices, which need not necessarily be similar to device **10**. For example, the short-range communications subsystem **42** may include an infrared device and associated circuitry and components or a Bluetooth™ communication module to allow the device **10** to communicate with similarly-enabled systems and devices.

The USB port **18** provides the mobile device **10** with a serial port for linking directly with other computers to exchange data and/or to receive power. The USB port **18** also provides the mobile device **10** with a means for receiving

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power from an external power source. For example, in a personal digital assistant (PDA)-type communication device, the USB port **18** could be used to allow the mobile device **10** to synchronize data with a user's desktop computer (not shown). The USB port **18** could also enable a user to set parameters in the mobile device **10** such as preferences through the use of an external device or software application. In addition the USB port **18** may also be used to provide a means for downloading information or software to the mobile device **10** without using the wireless communication network **34**. The USB port **18** can provide a direct and thus reliable and trusted connection that may for example be used to load an encryption key onto the mobile device **10** thereby enabling secure device communication.

Coupled to the USB port **18** is a USB connector **54**. The USB connector **54** is the physical component that couples the USB port to the outside world. In the exemplary mobile device **10**, the USB connector **54** is used to transmit and receive data from an external data/power source **56**, receive power from the external data/power source **56**, direct the transmitted/received data from/to the USB port **18**, and direct the received power to the power subsystem **20**.

The exemplary power subsystem **20** comprises a charging and power distribution subsystem **58** and a battery **60**. The charging and power distribution subsystem **58** performs many functions. It may be used to transfer energy to the battery **60** from the external data/power source **56** to charge the battery **60** and also to distribute power to the many power requiring components within the mobile device **10**. The charging subsystem **58** may be capable of determining the presence of a battery **60** and/or a power circuit coupled to the mobile device **10**, such as an AC adapter, USB connection, or car adapter, which alternatively can act as power sources **56** to provide power for the mobile device **10** and to charge the battery **60**. Additionally, the charging subsystem **58** may have the ability to determine if a power source **56** is coupled to the mobile device **10** and, in the absence of such a coupling, cause the mobile device **10** to be powered by the battery **60**.

The power distributed by the charging and power distribution subsystem **58** may be derived from energy stored in the battery **60** and/or energy received from the external data/power source **56**. When the battery **60** is depleted, the charging and power distribution subsystem **58** transfers energy from the power source **56** to recharge the battery **60**. Optionally, the charging and power distribution subsystem **58** may also transfer energy from the power source **56** to other components in the mobile device **10** to power the mobile device **10** when the battery **60** has been depleted and is recharging. When the data/power source **56** is not connected to the mobile device **10**, power for the device **10** is derived from the battery **60**.

Exemplary USB Adapter

FIG. 2 is a schematic diagram of a first embodiment of an adapter **100** that can be used to couple the mobile device **10** of FIG. 1 to the data/power source **56** of FIG. 1. In this example the adapter **100** is a USB adapter **100** that comprises a primary USB connector **102**, a power converter **104**, a plug unit **106**, and an identification subsystem **108**. The power converter is a known element in the art and typically includes at least one of the following components: switching converter, transformer, DC source, voltage regulator, linear regulator and rectifier. In the embodiment shown in FIG. 2, the USB adapter **100** is shown coupling a mobile device **10** to one of one or more types of power sockets **110N**, **10D**, **10B**, and **100**. Also shown in FIG. 2 is an optional auxiliary

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USB connector **112** that can be used to couple the mobile device **10** to a data source (not shown) such as a personal computer.

In the embodiment shown in FIG. 2, the primary USB connector **102** is configured to mate with the USB connector **54** of the mobile device **10**. The USB adapter **100** is operable to provide power to the mobile device **10** through the Vbus and Gnd power pins in the USB connectors **54** and **102**. The USB adapter **100** also optionally provides a communication path for data across the D+ and D- data pins in the USB connectors **54** and **102**.

The plug unit **106** is preferably a conventional plug unit that can be used to couple with a conventional power socket to receive power therefrom. For example, the plug unit **106** can be a two prong or three prong plug of the type used in North America that can couple to a North American AC power socket **110N** that provides 115 VAC. In the embodiment shown in FIG. 2, the plug unit **106** can accept one or more types of plug adapters **114N**, **114B**, **114D**, and **114** that are configured to couple to the plug unit **106** and are further configured to directly mate with one or more types of power sockets **110N**, **10D**, **10B**, and **100**. The plug unit **106** can be configured to receive energy from a power socket **110N**, **110D**, **110B**, or **100**, either directly or through the use of a plug adapter, and is operative to transfer the received energy to the power converter **104**.

The power converter **104** is operative to receive energy from a power socket **110N**, **110D**, **110B**, or **100** and to convert that received energy to a form that can be used by the mobile device **10**. For example, the power converter **104** can be of conventional construction such as a switching power converter that converts 115 VAC to 5 VDC. Also, the power converter **104** could comprise a D.C. regulator circuit that converts a D.C. input to a D.C. output. The power converter **104** could also be adapted to accept a wide range of input energy levels and frequencies. Alternatively, the power converter **104** could be adapted to accept a limited range of input energy levels and frequencies, wherein the plug adapters are operable to convert the possible input energy levels and frequencies to a range that the power converter can accommodate. The power converter **104** provides its energy output to the mobile device **10** via the Vbus and Gnd pins of the primary USB connector **102**.

Through the use of a variety of different types of plug adapters, the USB adapter **100** can be adapted to receive energy from various types of power sockets **110N**, **110D**, **110B**, or **100**. For example, using the appropriate plug adapter **114**, **114B**, **114D**, and **114N**, the USB adapter **100** can receive energy from a power socket such as an 115 VAC North American power socket **110N**, or a 12 VDC automobile power socket, or an air power socket, or others.

For example, in North America, a type "N" power socket is commonly available. The plug adapter **114N** can be releasably attached to the plug unit **106** thereby allowing any North American power socket **114N** to be used as a power source. When traveling to a locale which does not have the North American power socket **114N**, an alternate plug adapter such as adapters **114**, **114B**, or **114D** may be selected by the user, according to the power socket **10D**, **110B**, or **100** available at the locale. The plug adapter **114**, **114B**, or **114D** may then be releasably attached to plug unit **106** in place of the plug adapter **114N**, thereby allowing the USB power adapter **100** to connect to a local power supply via the local power socket. Various other plug adapters are envisioned that can be configured to operate with alternate power sources such as for instance car sockets.

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The power distribution and charging subsystem **58** of the mobile device **10** can selectively use the power provided on the Vbus and Gnd lines of the USB connector **54** to provide power to the mobile device **10**, charge the battery **60**, or both. A more detailed discussion of how the charging function of mobile device **10** can be implemented is described in U.S. Provisional Application No. 60/273,021 filed on Mar. 1, 2001 and entitled "System and Method for Adapting a USB to Provide Power for Charging a Mobile Device" which has been incorporated herein by reference.

Typically when a mobile device **10** receives power over the USB from a USB host, it is required to draw power in accordance with the USB specification. The USB specification specifies a process for transferring energy across the USB called enumeration and limits the electrical current that can flow across the USB.

The USB adapter **100** contributes to a system wherein a device **10** that follows the USB specification when coupled to a typical USB host via its USB port can be informed that the USB adapter **100** has been coupled to the device **10** and that the device **10** can now draw power without regard to the USB specification and the USB specification imposed limits.

The identification subsystem **108** provides an identification signal to the mobile device **10** that the power source is not a USB limited source. The identification signal could be the communication of a single voltage on one or more of the USB data lines, different voltages on the two data lines, a series of pulses or voltage level changes, or other types of electrical signals. The identification subsystem **108** that generates the identification signal could have multiple types of configurations. In one embodiment, the identification subsystem **108** comprises a hard-wired connection of a single voltage level to both data lines. In another embodiment, the identification subsystem **108** comprises a USB controller that is operable to communicate an identification signal to the mobile device. Additional embodiments are contemplated. The identification subsystem **108** may optionally be configured to have the capability of electrically connecting or disconnecting the power output from the power converter **104** from the USB connector **102** and/or to connect or disconnect any data inputs from the USB adapter **100** to the USB connector **102**.

In addition to providing power to the mobile device **10** over the primary USB connector **102**, the USB adapter **100** may optionally be equipped with an auxiliary USB connector **112** that allows the USB adapter **100** to create a communication path between the mobile device **10** and some other device capable of communicating over the USB such as a personal computer, another mobile device or some other type of device.

The USB adapter **100** preferably provides a communication path between the D+ and D- pins of the Primary USB connector **102** and the D+ and D- pins of the auxiliary USB connector **112**. In the embodiment shown, the communication path also traverses the identification subsystem **108**. Alternatively, the communication path could bypass the identification subsystem **108**. The USB adapter **100** can thus act as a pass through device for communication between a USB hub or host and a mobile device **10**.

Optionally, the USB adapter **100** could also transfer energy from the power converter **104** to the auxiliary USB connector **112** thereby providing a device coupled to the auxiliary USB connector **112** with power. In this arrangement, the identification subsystem **108** could also provide an identification signal to the device coupled to the auxiliary USB connector **112** to inform that device that the power source is not a USB limited source.

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Exemplary Illustration of the use of a USB Adapter with a Mobile Device

When a USB adapter **100** is connected to a mobile device **10**, the identification subsystem **108** of the USB adapter **100** preferably provides an identification signal to the mobile device **10** to notify the mobile device **10** that the device **10** is connected to a power source that is not subject to the power limits imposed by the USB specification. Preferably, the mobile device **10** is programmed to recognize the identification signal and therefore recognizes that an identification signal has been transmitted by the USB adapter **100**. After recognizing a valid identification signal, the mobile device **10**, draws power through the USB adapter **100** without waiting for enumeration or charge negotiation.

The detection of the identification signal may be accomplished using a variety of methods. For example, the microprocessor **12** may detect the identification signal by detecting the presence of an abnormal data line condition at the USB port **18**. The detection may also be accomplished through the use of other device subsystems **44** in the mobile device **10**. The preferred identification signal results from the application of voltage signals greater than 2 volts to both the D+ and D- lines in the USB connector. The preferred method of identification is described below in greater detail with reference to FIG. 3.

At step **210**, the mobile device **10** detects the presence of a voltage on the Vbus line of the USB connector **54** via the USB port **18**. At step **220**, the mobile device checks the state of the D+ and D- lines of the USB connector. In the example shown in the drawings, the D+ and D- lines are compared to a 2V reference. Also, in this example, the identification subsystem **108** of the USB adapter **100** may have applied a logic high signal, such as +5V reference, to both the D+ and D- lines to identify the attached device as a USB adapter **100**. If the voltages on both the D+ and D- lines of the USB connector are greater than 2 Volts (step **220**), then the mobile device **10** determines that the device connected to the USB connector **54** is not a typical USB host or hub and that a USB adapter **100** has been detected (step **230**). The mobile device **10** can then charge the battery or otherwise use power provided via the Vbus and Gnd lines in the USB connector **54** (step **260**) without waiting for enumeration.

If, however, after the mobile device **10** detects the presence of a voltage on the Vbus line of the USB connector **54** and determines that the voltages on both the D+ and D- lines of the USB connector are not greater than 2 Volts (step **220**), then the mobile device **10** determines that a USB host or hub has been detected (step **240**). A typical USB host or hub weakly holds its D+ and D- lines at zero volts when it is not connected to another device. The mobile device **10** can then signal the USB host or hub to initiate the enumeration process (step **250**) and can charge the battery or otherwise use power provided via the Vbus and Gnd lines in the USB connector (step **260**) in accordance with the power limits imposed by the USB specification. The enumeration process is typically initiated after the mobile device **10** applies approximately zero volts to the D- line and approximately 5 volts to the D+ line to inform the host of the mobile device's **10** presence and communication speed.

Therefore, when a USB adapter **100** is coupled to the mobile device **10** and has been identified as a USB adapter **100**, the mobile device **10** can forego the enumeration process and charge negotiation process and immediately draw energy from the USB power adapter **100** at a desired rate, for instance at 5 unit loads, i.e. 500 mA. While the mobile device **10** charges its battery using the USB adapter **100**, the mobile device **10** can disable its typical USB

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functions. If, however, the mobile device **10** detects that a USB host or hub is coupled to the mobile device **10**, the mobile device **10** can apply a voltage to the D+ line to indicate to the USB host or hub that the mobile device **10** is coupled thereto and await enumeration and USB charge negotiation.

If the USB adapter **100**, is coupled to the mobile device **10**, and the mobile device **10** does not identify the USB adapter **100** through communications with the identification module **108**, the mobile device **10** may stop drawing energy from the Vbus and Gnd lines of the USB connector **54**. This may occur, for example, if the mobile device **10** is not programmed to identify the USB adapter **100**. The mobile device **10** may mistakenly identify the USB adapter **100** as a typical USB host or hub and await enumeration before drawing substantial energy. To guard against this, the USB adapter **100** can optionally be adapted to function with mobile devices that are not programmed to recognize the USB adapter **100**.

In that scenario, the USB adapter **100** can be adapted to provide energy to a mobile device by using the knowledge that the mobile device will draw energy from a connected device for a period of time before it stops drawing energy due to lack of enumeration. The USB adapter **100** can optionally provide power for charging a battery **60** in a mobile device by periodically switching the voltages on the Vbus and Gnd lines between on and off states. When the USB adapter **100** is coupled to the mobile device, the identification subsystem **108** can apply an on-voltage (5 V for example) between the Vbus and Gnd lines. The mobile device will draw energy while awaiting enumeration. After a period of time, the identification subsystem **108** can apply an off-voltage (0 volts) between the Vbus and Gnd lines thereby fooling the mobile device into determining that the unidentified USB device has been disconnected from the mobile device. The identification subsystem **108** can then reapply an on-voltage between the Vbus and Gnd lines. The mobile device will draw energy again while awaiting enumeration. This cycle can be repeated to periodically apply energy to the mobile device, for example, to recharge the battery **60** of the mobile device.

Additional Exemplary Embodiments Of USB Adapters

Shown in FIG. 4 is a schematic diagram of an additional exemplary embodiment of a USB adapter **300** that is coupled to a mobile device **10**. The exemplary USB adapter **300** comprises a USB connector **302**, a power converter **304**, a plug unit **306**, and an identification subsystem **308**. The USB connector **302**, plug unit **306**, and identification subsystem **308**, preferably correspond to the USB connector **102**, plug unit **106**, and identification subsystem **108** which were described earlier with respect to the first embodiment. Similar to the first embodiment, the additional embodiment may optionally be equipped with various plug adapters **314N**, **314D**, **314B**, and **314** that preferably are releasably attachable to plug unit **306** so that the appropriate plug adapter **314N**, **314D**, **314B**, or **314** can be selected by a user to allow the USB adapter **300** to couple to and receive energy from an available power socket **310N**, **310D**, **310B**, or **310**. The exemplary USB power converter **300** further comprises a charging subsystem **316** and battery receptacle **318** for coupling the USB adapter **300** to an external battery **320** that may be optionally coupled thereto.

The battery receptacle **318** provide a location for releasably coupling an external battery **320** thereto so that the external battery can be charged via the USB adapter **300**. This provides the USB adapter **300** with a mechanism for

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charging, for example, a mobile device's primary or spare battery when the battery has been separated from or is not coupled to the mobile device 10.

To accommodate this functionality, the power converter 304 is capable of providing the proper voltage levels for the USB connector 302 and also capable of providing necessary voltage and current levels to drive a battery charging subsystem 316. The power converter 304 is preferably a dual power converter that may be constructed using conventional or non-conventional architectures. With respect to the portion of the power converter 304 that provides energy to the USB connector 302, that portion is preferably similar in construction and function to the power converter 104 of the first embodiment.

Preferably, the charging subsystem 316 performs in a substantially similar manner to charging subsystem 58 of the mobile device 10. But, for efficiency and simplicity of design, certain aspects of the dual power converter 304 and the charging subsystem 316 may be combined, as both are local to the USB adapter 300.

Other alternative embodiments of the USB adapter may include various combinations of components described above with respect to the first and additional embodiments. Another embodiment of the USB adapter may include a second or more auxiliary USB connectors. A USB adapter having one or more auxiliary USB connectors may optionally be configured such that one or more of the auxiliary USB connectors may have power from the USB adapter's power converter made available to it so that multiple USB devices may draw power simultaneously. Preferably, a USB adapter having multiple auxiliary USB connectors will be configured such that the data lines in the auxiliary connectors can, on a selective basis, be electrically connected to or disconnected from the data lines in the primary USB connector. This allows a mobile device connected to the primary USB connector to receive energy from the adapter regardless of whether a USB host or hub is connected to an auxiliary USB connector. It is also contemplated that a USB adapter may be embodied in a USB host or hub.

CONCLUSION

The embodiments described herein are examples of structures, systems or methods having elements corresponding to the elements of the invention recited in the claims. This written description may enable those skilled in the art to make and use embodiments having alternative elements that likewise correspond to the elements of the invention recited in the claims. The intended scope of the invention thus includes other structures, systems or methods that do not differ from the literal language of the claims, and further includes other structures, systems or methods with insubstantial differences from the literal language of the claims. Although the embodiments have been described with reference to the USB interface, it is contemplated that the invention could be applicable to devices and systems that use other standard interfaces such as the IEEE 1394 interface.

The invention claimed is:

1. A Universal Serial Bus ("USB") adapter for providing power to a mobile device through a USB port, comprising:
 - a plug unit configured to receive energy from a power socket;
 - a power converter coupled to the plug unit, the power converter being configured to regulate the received energy from the power socket to generate a power output;

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an identification subsystem configured to generate an identification signal, wherein the identification signal is configured to indicate to the mobile device that the power socket is not a USB host or hub; and

a USB connector coupled to the power converter and the identification subsystem, the USB connector being configured to couple the power output and the identification signal to the mobile device.

2. The USB adapter of claim 1, wherein the plug unit is configured to couple directly with the power socket.

3. The USB adapter of claim 2, wherein the plug unit is configured to couple to at least one power socket selected from the group consisting of: North American power socket, United Kingdom power socket, European power socket, Australian power socket, airplane power socket, and automobile power socket.

4. The USB adapter of claim 1, further comprising a plug adapter that is configured to couple the plug unit to the power socket.

5. The USB adapter of claim 4, wherein the plug adapter is configured to couple to at least one power socket selected from the group consisting of: North American power socket, United Kingdom power socket, European power socket, Australian power socket, airplane power socket, and automobile power socket.

6. the USB adapter of claim 1, wherein the identification signal comprises a voltage level that is applied to at least one data line in the USB connector.

7. The USB adapter of claim 1, wherein the identification subsystem comprises a hard-wired connection of a voltage level to one or more data lines in the USB connector.

8. The USB adapter of claim 1, wherein the identification subsystem comprises a USB controller that is configured to provide a voltage level to one or more data lines in the USB connector.

9. The USB adapter of claim 1, wherein the identification subsystem further comprises a switch that is configured to couple the power output to the USB connector.

10. The USB adapter of claim 9, wherein the identification subsystem is configured to cause the switch to disconnect the power output from the USB connector.

11. The USB adapter of claim 10, wherein the identification subsystem is configured to cause the switch to reconnect the power output to the USB connector.

12. The USB adapter of claim 1, further comprising an auxiliary USB connector.

13. The USB adapter of claim 12, wherein one or more data lines of the auxiliary USB connector are coupled to one or more data lines of the USB connector via the identification subsystem.

14. The USB adapter of claim 12, wherein the power converter is operable to generate a second power output that is coupled to the auxiliary USB connector.

15. The USB adapter of claim 1, further comprising:

- a battery receptacle configured to attach a rechargeable battery; and
- a battery charging subsystem coupled between the battery receptacle and the power converter, the battery charging subsystem being configured to receive energy from the power converter and to provide power at the battery receptacle.

16. The USB adapter of claim 1, wherein the power converter comprises at least one component selected from the group consisting of: switching converter, transformer, DC source, voltage regulator, linear regulator and rectifier.

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17. A method for providing energy to a mobile device using a USB adapter that includes a USB connector for coupling the USB adapter to the mobile device, comprising:
receiving a power input from a power socket;
generating a regulated DC power output from the power 5 input;
generating an identification signal that is configured to indicate to the mobile device that the power socket is not a USB host or hub;
providing the identification signal on one or more data 10 pins of the USB connector; and
providing the power output on one or more power pins of the USB connector.

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18. A Universal Serial Bus (“USB”) adapter for providing a source of power to a mobile device through a USB port, comprising:
means for receiving energy from a power socket;
means for regulating the received energy from the power socket to generate a power output;
means for generating an identification signal that indicates to the mobile device that the power socket is not a USB hub or host; and
means for coupling the power output and identification signal to the mobile device.

* * * * *

UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE
CERTIFICATE OF CORRECTION

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APPLICATION NO. : 11/175885
DATED : July 3, 2007
INVENTOR(S) : Daniel M. Fischer et al.

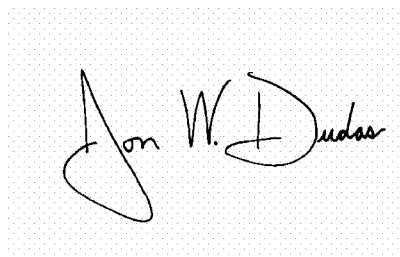
Page 1 of 1

It is certified that error appears in the above-identified patent and that said Letters Patent is hereby corrected as shown below:

Col. 6, line 66, replace "10D" with -- 110D --
Col. 6, line 67, replace "10B" with -- 110B --
Col. 7, line 22, replace "10D" with -- 110D --
Col. 7, line 22, replace "10B" with -- 110B --
Col. 7, line 60, replace "10D" with -- 110D --

Signed and Sealed this

Eighteenth Day of December, 2007

A handwritten signature in black ink on a light gray dotted background. The signature is written in a cursive style and reads "Jon W. Dudas".

JON W. DUDAS
Director of the United States Patent and Trademark Office